THE GLOBE AND MAIL

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HD **Globe Climate: How should Canada approach green stimulus plans? We asked architects of Obama's strategy; Adam Radwanski thought it might be useful to reach out to some of the people who helped design Barack Obama's green-stimulus spending back in the last global economic crisis**

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Good afternoon, and welcome to Globe Climate, a newsletter about climate change, environment and resources in Canada.

Earlier this year, federal scientists said that a majority of forests in Canada face a higher-than-normal wildfire risk this summer, especially in the West.

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This week, Canada announced it is investing $5-million to create a national wildfire research network , years after the Canadian Forest Service warned that wildfire expertise and research was not keeping up with dramatic shifts associated with climate change.

We know that warmer weather causes multiple increases to risk of fire, including drier forests and more lightning.

We're learning from a study by University of British Columbia that there are immediate, harmful health effects of wildfire smoke and researchers say the smoke has the potential to make viral respiratory infections such as COVID-19 even more severe.

Now, let's catch you up on other news.

Noteworthy reporting this week:

A deeper dive

Architects of Obama's green strategy have some lessons for Canada

Adam Radwanski is The Globe's climate change columnist and feature writer. For this week's deeper dive he talks about a piece he wrote after speaking with key architects of Obama's Recovery Act.

Amid all the recent talk of Justin Trudeau's government considering using coming recovery spending to fight climate change, which I've been covering along with others at The Globe, I thought it might be useful to reach out to some of the people who helped design Barack Obama's green-stimulus spending back in the last global economic crisis.

For one thing, that U.S.$90-billion component of Mr. Obama's 2009 Recovery Act stood as the Western world's biggest effort to use stimulus to achieve long-term emissions reductions, heading into the current situation.

For another, Canada's federal government mostly eschewed a climate focus in its great recession stimulus under Stephen Harper, so it seems like a good idea to learn from others' experiences now that we have a Prime Minister more inclined to go that route.

But I was especially curious to hear from the Obama folks because I was thinking (and writing) recently about the risk-reward calculus for governments using public dollars to place clean-tech bets that may or may not pay out. And I wanted to know what they took away from the experience of working on a stimulus program that arguably achieved its intended goals overall, but was vilified for an infamous failure in the form of the failed solar-panel manufacturer Solyndra's US$528-million default on a government-backed loan.

I wound up speaking with a couple of the key architects of Mr. Obama's plan, Carol Browner and Joseph Aldy, as well as the President's director of legislative affairs at the time. And I got their surprising case for why they wish they'd taken more risks like the Solyndra one - along with other lessons they think Canada and other countries going down this path should currently be heeding.

-Adam

What else you missed

* Quiet Salish Sea gives scientists chance to study endangered killer whales: A significant drop in sea traffic brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic has created what scientists call a rare opportunity to study how quieter waters affect southern resident killer whales off the British Columbia coast.

* Despite environmental initiatives, Amazon's carbon footprint grew: The company said activities tied to its businesses emitted 51.17 million metric tons of carbon dioxide last year, the equivalent of 13 coal-burning power plants running for a year. That's up 15 per cent from 2018.

* U.S. toilet-paper makers get failing grade from environmental group: A leading U.S. environmental group criticized Procter & Gamble, Kimberly-Clark and Georgia-Pacific for using fibre from Canada's old-growth forests – trees considered key to limiting climate change.

* Large salmon returning to North American rivers fell to near historic lows in 2019: The vast majority of large salmon in North America return to three regions : Labrador, Quebec and the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence.

* Germany takes EU reins to steer virus-battered economy towards green recovery: Germany takes over the rotating EU presidency on July 1 and will chair meetings of EU ministers until the end of the year.

* Survey estimates much higher Alberta bird populations than thought: But researchers say that while the new counts may be good news they don't change the overall declining trend of the province's boreal songbirds.

* Shell plans major overhaul around climate drive, CEO tells employees in video: In a video interview published on Shell's internal website, CEO Ben van Beurden said that the restructuring would involve job cuts as part of broad cost reductions, although no figures have been decided yet, according to sources who saw the interview.

Opinion and analysis

The Norway maple is a bully, and shouldn't be confused with the sugar maple tree

Peter Kuitenbrouwer: "Please just stop using Norway maples as a symbol of Canada. That ecological bully does not represent the best part of our nature."

Canada's recovery plans should focus on building the infrastructure of the future

Grant Bishop: "If confronting climate change is the moonshot of our time , this can be the Apollo program for a generation of engineers and scientists."

Here's what readers had to say

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Readers had plenty to say about last week's deep dive story on Carbon capture and storage . We've selected a few comments on the piece to share.

Brian Burkes : "Keep developing new ways to create energy that are green. At the same time, keep making fossil fuels cleaner and safer - like CO2 capture. Why else would the Gates Foundation invest in carbon capture, if they didn't think it could be apart of the solution? … Simply shutting off oil and gas is not a viable solution, no matter how many times people repeat it."

Mr. Yellin : "Like hydrogen, this may just be a small part of the reduction in GHGs."

Buggsy2u : "Time to forget the corporate dreamers and dream of CCS and move on quickly with realities of an appropriate carbon tax and renewable energy for a next big leap in productivity with health and quality of life improvements of all living things on planet Earth."

Trickrisco : "Nobody mentioned embodied C02, the emissions required to build/maintain these machines. (Production of steel, aluminum, transportation, etc. etc.) . Did anyone crunch the numbers? When embodied emissions are considered, chances are CCS devices are net emitters of C02, or at least vastly more inefficient than claimed."

Making waves

Each week The Globe will profile a young person making a difference in Canada. This week we're highlighting the work of Albert Lalonde doing climate justice activism.

My name is Albert Lalonde and I'm an 18-year-old climate justice activist from Montreal and a member of la CEVES, a coalition that unites local youth climate activists from high schools, colleges and universities across so-called Quebec. We are behind numerous climate protests and initiatives across the province, including the Sept. 27, 2019 protest in Montreal that was attended by over 500,000 people. It is very clear for us that it's not a matter of not being heard any more, we have to force change and we have no other choice but to make it happen. Cynicism is a luxury my generation simply cannot afford. Apart from organizing protests, in order to secure myself, my family and my friends a healthy, safe and just future, I shamefully need to sue my own government in order to seek proper protection as part of the La Rose v. HMTQ youth climate litigation.

- Albert

Photo of the week

Do you know an engaged young person? Someone who represents the real engines pursuing change in the country? Email us at GlobeClimate@globeandmail.com to tell us about them.

Guides and explainers

* We've rounded up our reporters' content to help you learn about sustainable ways to travel , invest , and generally to learn about our species at risk .

* If you like to read, here are books to help the environmentalist in you grow, as well as a downloadable e-book of Micro skills - Little Steps to Big Change .

We want to hear from you. Email us: GlobeClimate@globeandmail.com . Do you know someone who needs this newsletter? Send them to our Newsletters page.

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